

New Video Series to Commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month in Connecticut

Connecticut's Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with the launch of a series of video segments, to be available through social media, Latino media and public broadcasting, highlighting community leaders and their heritage and culture. In addition, LPRAC is hosting a National Postal Museum Exhibit at the State Capitol and Hartford Public Library which highlights the varied and enduring contributions of Hispanic Americans.

Both observances get underway this month, coinciding with the start of Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated across the United States annually, September 15 – October 15.



The video series, which will feature a new video each week for six weeks, will recognize a member of the LPRAC board, along with a brief description of their work in the community, accompanied by a quote from a nationally recognized Latino leader that has had a profound and positive influence on our country's legacy.

The individuals to be featured are Richard A. Cruz of Bridgeport, Emanuela Palmares of Danbury, Yolanda Castillo of Manchester, Pablo Soto of Meriden, Ana Gonzalez of New Haven, and Christian Soto of New London. In addition to living in communities throughout the state, the featured LPRAC Commissioners pursue a range of avocations, from entrepreneurs and educators to military and activists.

In addition to appearing in the media, the videos will be available on the LPRAC website, www.cga.ct.gov/lprac. It is the first time that such a video series has been developed for the observance.

"As Latinos in Connecticut, we carry within our soul a rich heritage and a delectable *sabor* that stems out from our being into everything we do. During this Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrate our ancestors, the significant contributions of past generations, the gifts and work of the present Latinos and the prospect of a future full of hope," said Ana Gonzalez, LPRAC Public Information Committee Chair.

The U.S. Postal Museum commemorative stamp exhibit depicting famous Hispanics/Latinos and historic events will be on display from September 1 through September 30 at the State Capitol, and moves to the Hartford Public Library from October 1 through October 31.

During the month-long exhibit at the State Capitol, there will be a flag raising ceremony held on September 24 at 12 Noon. This year, the Brazilian culture will be particularly highlighted, and the Brazilian flag will be raised to the top of the State Capitol. There will also be a performance by Brazilian dancers as Brazilian and Hispanic community leaders come together to celebrate Hispanic Heritage. The



public is welcome to attend the historic event on the south lawn of the State Capitol in Hartford and at a reception, 12:30 to 2:30 pm, in the Capitol building's Old Judiciary Room.

The display in the public corridor between the State Capitol and the Legislative Office Building celebrates Hispanic/Latino influence on the fabric of American society, featuring individuals who have been honored by being selected to appear on a stamp by the U.S. Postal Service, reflecting their individual contributions from all walks of life. Among those whose stamps are featured in the commemorative display are:

- Roberto Clemente, baseball player with the Pittsburgh Pirates; of Puerto Rican descent
- Celia Cruz, renowned performer from Cuba
- Cesar Chavez, migrant worker advocate of Mexican descent
- Carmen Miranda, popular movie star of Portuguese/Brazilian

U.S. postage stamps have long been seen as a reflection of what we value as a people and a culture, and the National Postal Museum's *Celebrating Hispanic Heritage: People, Places and Events on Stamps* draws focus to the many contributions of Hispanic Americans and Latinos to the exploration, culture, growth, and defense of the United States.

Hispanic Heritage Month, whose roots go back to 1968, begins each year on September 15, the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile and Belize also celebrate their independence days during this period, and Columbus Day (Día de la Raza) is October 12.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2013, roughly 54 million people or 17 percent of the U.S. population is of Hispanic or Latino origin. This represents a significant increase from Census 2000, which counted the Hispanic population at 35.3 million or nearly 13 percent of the total U.S. population. In Connecticut in 2013, 14.7 percent of the state's population was Hispanic; furthermore, if not for the increase in the state's Hispanic population, Connecticut would have experienced negative population growth since 2010.

Hispanic Heritage Week was approved by President Lyndon Johnson, and the length of the celebration was expanded by President Ronald Reagan to cover a 30-day period (September 15 - October 15). It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988.

The Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) is a nonpartisan policy agency within the legislative branch of government created in 1994 by an act of the Connecticut Legislature (i.e., P.A. 94-152, amended by P.A. 03-229 and amended by P.A. 09-07). Under Public Act 09-07, LPRAC consists of 21 appointed community leaders that are mandated to advise the Connecticut General Assembly and the Governor on policies that foster progress in the Latino communities residing in Connecticut.

For more information...

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